



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



東京大学
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UNITED NATIONS
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Secretariat

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International Society for Sustainability Science (ISSS)

A platform for international knowledge-sharing to promote
integration and cooperation among diverse academic fields
for sustainable society

Founding Members:

Arizona State University (USA)
Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)
The University of Tokyo (Japan)
United Nations University

International Society for Sustainability Science (ISSS)

Goals and Objectives

The over-arching goal of ISSS is to overcome the limitations of traditional fragmented academic disciplines in addressing the pre-eminent issue of the 21st century: building sustainable society.

ISSS will promote integration and cooperation among diverse academic fields and across geographic and national borders with a particular focus on developing and enhancing top-flight academic programs in sustainability science.

The importance of preparing the next generation of leaders in academia, industry, government and civil society with the tools and skills they need to promote sustainability, no matter where their careers may lead them, cannot be overstated. For sustainability is not a fixed goal but, rather, a dynamic force for transformation that can only be maintained if future thought leaders are prepared to meet the challenges that such societal evolution demands.

Steering Committee

The four founding universities of the ISSS are represented on the steering committee for the society. Each of the university is a pioneer in education in sustainability and has launched degree programs in this academic field. They are:

Arizona State University (USA)
Sapienza University of Rome (Italy),
The University of Tokyo (Japan), and
United Nations University.

The society will be administered at the University of Tokyo

To meet these goals, ISSS will:

- Strengthen academia's reception of and commitment to education in sustainability science through the sharing of experiences and celebration of institutional success
- Create, enhance, and promote a scientifically-based vision of a sustainable future for the world and its inhabitants through the society's focus on education
- Provide expanded opportunities for international and interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty and students engaged in sustainability science research and education
- Expand opportunities for universities and research institutions located in developing countries to participate in these collaborations
- Promote development of a new base of scientific knowledge that is specifically aimed at societal transformation for sustainability
- Strive to enhance synergies and reduce duplication of effort within the community of sustainability science scholars

Background The creation of this new society is the third in a series of steps taken by the founding universities to build momentum for and long-term academic commitment to the development of sustainability science. It follows the development of an annual international conference on sustainability science (ICSS), now in its third year, and the launching of an academic journal, *Sustainability Science*. The seed for the creation of an international society for sustainability science was planted at the G8 University Summit in Sapporo Japan in 2008. Representatives to that summit endorsed to establish a comprehensive network that would facilitate cooperation among universities and research institutions to address complex sustainability issues. Following that endorsement, the annual International Conference on Sustainability Science (ICSS) was launched in 2009 at The University of Tokyo. Subsequent conferences have been held at Sapienza University of Rome (2010) and Arizona State University (2012). Conference hosts and sponsors as well as participants agree that the value of the annual conference lies in its fundamental aim to maintain momentum, foster collaborations, and share insights from experiences in promoting sustainability science in their own institutions. The second ICSS, held at Sapienza University of Rome in June 2010 focused on the urgent need for the development of such programs and means to advance them. The third ICSS held in February 2012 examines three case studies with a view to deeper understanding of the state-of-the-art of sustainability science.

The need for all of these steps in the development of sustainability science stems from the new base of scientific knowledge leading to solutions that is needed to address the pressing and complex problems that confront our planet. These problems represent an utterly novel challenge to scientists and decision-makers worldwide. No institution or individual is capable of mastering the broad spectrum of knowledge that is needed to provide direction to building a sustainable world. Complex problems such as global climate, energy, resilience of society including ecosystem services, and poverty are the subject of a great deal of research. But they

have been studied separately, not holistically. Building a sustainable society requires the simultaneous attainment of three over-arching goals: a low-carbon society, one that uses many fewer resources, and that functions

in harmony with nature. In order to advance this vision of sustainability it is now clear that the separate streams of research efforts must be synthesized into a coherent whole with sufficient consideration of other complex interactions among them. Moreover, while research is necessary, it is not sufficient for attainment of a sustainability vision. Potential solutions will materialize only if scientists, teachers, and decision-makers at every level and in every societal sector understand the meaning of a vision of a sustainable future and share values that underpin such a vision. Such a community can only be developed through education. Recognizing this, each of the founding universities of ISSS has launched full-fledged degree programs in sustainability science. The ISSS is now a platform on which to expand that community and upon which dedicated scholars from all disciplines can come together, share knowledge and together create, enhance, and promote a collective vision of sustainable society and to develop and maintain the means to realize it.

The Official Journal The official journal of the society is the journal *Sustainability Science* Springer, www.springer.com/environment/environmental+management/journal/11625. Professor Kazuhiko Takeuchi of the United Nations University is the Editor in Chief assisted by an editorial board that consists of experts in sustainability science from around the world. The journal offers insights into interactions within and between nature and the rest of human society and the complex mechanisms that sustain both. It provides a trans-disciplinary platform for contributing to building sustainability science as a new academic discipline focusing on topics that are not addressed by conventional disciplines and in other academic journals. Celebrating the significance of diverse perspectives in conducting sustainability science, the journal also serves as a multi-disciplinary forum for communication among a broad spectrum of researchers, policy makers, practitioners, educators and students. The editors of the journal anticipate the use of the new knowledge generated through sustainability science to go far beyond academia in collaboration with industry, governments, and the public as a basis for helping to build a sustainable society.

Membership The steering committee of ISSS welcomes the participation of universities and other research institutions around the world. To keep informed of activities and information related to the society, please contact the secretariat at the University of Tokyo.

